

May 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

The President. I can't quantify it. I just say the talks went reasonably well. But there's some story that we don't want a summit, and that's crazy. And I've assured Gorbachev of that personally.

It's great having you guys back on the plane again. It's wonderful.

Q. You don't want him in London?

The President. Who said I don't want him in London?

Q. Some anonymous official quoted by the New York Times says—

The President. That story is totally erroneous, I regret to say—totally.

Q. What does that mean?

The President. That means that it's wrong.

Q. You want him at the economic summit? You'd like him there?

The President. No decisions have been taken on that. If his coming there can help with the reform and genuinely help with

the reform, why, that would be a very, very important matter. But that story I can categorically say is wrong. And there was another one that said the same theme—somebody is peddling an erroneous line. We are dealing straight with Gorbachev; we're not playing games with him. I think he knows that, and I think Moiseyev knows that.

Q. A June summit?

The President. It's been a pleasure, gang, it's been a great pleasure. Great pleasure to be with you.

Note: The exchange took place in the morning aboard Air Force One while the President was en route to St. Paul, MN. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Gen. Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Union, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Students at the Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 22, 1991

The President. Is it scary to have the President coming? You see, I'll tell you something—the reason I ask the question is you guys may not know this, but I learn from this. Mr. Alexander is our Secretary of Education—where is he? Over here. And he's designed the program that's now our administration program, and one of the things in it is that adults, not just children but adults, should learn. And so he and I talked about—and the thing that I'm trying to learn is the computer. So, what you think is maybe elementary, but for me it's rather advanced. So, it's helpful to learn it on that basis, and then it sets a good example for other kids around the country because they'll see what you can do. You talk about programming this thing—a lot of kids are going to say, hey, maybe we can do more. Do you know what I mean?

That's good. Any questions? Have you got all the answers or—don't ask me about computers, okay?

Q. This is a question she wanted to say,

but I guess she couldn't get it out. She wanted to know: Did any of your grandchildren work with Legos?

The President. Work Legos? Yes. Yes, but not in—you mean in a computer sense or just playing with them?

Q. Yes, in a computer sense.

The President. I don't know the answer to that question. I would doubt it because I don't think this is widespread. And our grandkids are in Texas, Florida, Colorado, Virginia, and Maryland—and I don't know if at this level—and we have some grandchildren—that they have this kind of programming.

Q. It's available through the schools. It's probably not available commercially.

The President. Yes, but I'm wondering in the schools. He meant in school, didn't he? I don't know; I'm embarrassed to say I don't know what the programs are they're into. But I sure love to see them learn stuff. They all fool around with computers. I guess everybody does that around here.

Q. It's easy to learn once you get the hang of it.

The President. No.

Q. One question about education, sir.

The President. For this guy? For her?

Q. No, for you, Mr. President.

The President. If it's a hard one I'm going to ask the Secretary to answer it, because I don't want to answer a question when I don't know the answer.

Q. Most school systems cannot afford this kind of sophisticated state-of-the-art technology. Your program seems to be geared to innovation. What about all of the other school systems that don't have the funds—what can be done for them in Education 2000?

The President. Well, I think inherent in our program—there is funding inherent in it. And one of the things that I think will happen is when you have the revolutionary new schools, others will take the resources that they are using. They will reduce the kind of bureaucratic overhead, and they'll bring it to bear on innovative programs. And that's a part of our philosophy. And, yes, there will be new Federal funding.

We're sending up a piece of legislation that will request funding for or need action on 13 different aspects. But I think people learn by innovation. I don't imagine when this started it had fantastic amounts of money to begin with. So, what will happen is we will inspire, as it's always happened in this country—good example will inspire others. And, yes, there will be some funding involved, but we've got to start. We've got to begin to think anew on education. And that's what these kids are helping me understand even more.

This is new and not like what it used to be like in education. This isn't cost-intensive. I expect that they're pretty efficient. I saw one teacher in that room with lots of computers that seemed to be handling

many subjects. So, there's a lot of opportunity here.

Wouldn't you say, Sarah? [*Laughter*] I feel that way. How about you—do you want to add anything to the answer? That's not fair because you don't know the program we're talking about—whole program we're talking about. But all I'm saying is I bet you've got a lot of neighbors and friends that don't have this in their schools yet.

See, what they're saying is innovation, saying something new here—some would say radically new here. And they may come along in this program and your teachers may say, hey, we've got to change this a little bit. But they're on the cutting edge for revolutionizing education. And we have got to do that across our entire country. The old answers aren't good enough. They simply are not good enough.

The United States is spending at the Federal level an enormous amount on education, and at the State level. And yet, the results are not good enough. And you guys are going to make it better. Teachers are going to make it better. Superintendents are making it better. And that's why we're—one of the reasons I wanted to come out here is you set—you don't believe this, but you set an example for a lot of other kids just by that good answer you gave. And the same for you, Sarah.

With those words of wisdom, I've got to go on about my business. But I'm glad to see you. I hope you aren't nervous when we've finished.

Q. No, I'm just excited now.

The President. Just excited now? I'm pretty excited, too. It was wonderful. Good luck. I'd better go on.

Note: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. in the Integrated Learning Systems Tech Center. Prior to his remarks, he participated in a computer programming demonstration.